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ABSTRACT

Although effective faculty development programs rely heavily on evaluation and instructional techniques related to speech communication, very few faculty development centers have utilized the expertise of speech communication professionals. Speech communication professionals can do five things to improve their profession and to use their professional expertise to help others. These five things include (1) becoming aware of the activities of the program or center for faculty development on campus: (2) developing contacts with center personnel to understand their needs and offer help: (3) encouraging formal relationships between the speech communication department and the faculty development center: (4) encouraging students in speech communication to look to the faculty development center as an employment opportunity: and (5) developing cooperative programs in conjunction with schools of education and departments of psychology so that speech communication students can be trained to operate effectively in the environment of the faculty development center. (RL)

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# "THE ROLE OF A COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT IN A CENTER FOR INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICE AND RESEARCH"

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The decade of the 1970's brought many changes to higher education. The rapid enrollment inceases of the 1950's and 1960's ceased. Many schools considered themselves lucky if they did not lose great numbers of students but instead reached an enrollment balance known as "steady state." At the same time colleges were losing students, the students attending, as well as state legislatures, governing boards and parents, began demanding greater accountability. Criticism of the quality of instruction at all levels became standard.

In response to these pressures, many colleges and universities began to develop or accentuate programs for the improvement of faculty and instruction. Although various programs for faculty development had existed prior to the 1970's, in the seventies faculty development programs greatly expanded; often becoming institutional divisions knows as faculty development or instructional resource centers. By late 1976, John Centra's study of Faculty Development Practices in U.S. Colleges and Universities determined that 60% of American institutions of higher education had faculty development programs, with additional schools planning to add them.[1] His follow-up questionnaire revealed that of the responding institutions 93 were Ph.D. granting universities, 315 four-year colleges and 326 two-year colleges.[2] Furthermore, his data appears to reveal that especially community colleges, and to some degree four-year colleges, were doing a far better job in enticing faculty to use the new services than the universities were.[3]

Another study, edited in the same year by panel member Bill O'Connell, Jr. and others connected with the Southern Regional Education Board's

Undergraduate Education Reform Project, investigated "campus centers to stimulate and assist instructional development and improve teaching effectiveness" in senior institutions in the 14 states served by S.R.E.B.[4] The researchers identified twelve centers in the South, eleven of which contributed information to the study.

Although neither study was done to provide data about how the speech communication profession was involved or could be involved in faculty development both studies are useful for this purpose to a researcher armed with knowledge of the speech communication profession. Although these and other studies I have investigated, such as Berquist and Phillips, Goff, and Wergin, Mason, and Munson, reveal a broad and complex array of faculty development practices, many of which have little if any direct connection to speech communication, to a reader with a communication background they also demonstrate a strong dependence upon practices and skills common in the speech communication discipline.[5] Let me give you a few general examples of my point from the Centra study and then provide some specific illustrations from the Southern Regional Education Board's project.

One of the most effective methods Centra discovered for aiding teaching effectiveness was the use of media, specifically videotaping. This method was especially effective and used by faculty when teachers or individuals with specific, expertise in audio/visual aids and TV were available to lend assistance. Sixty percent of all the schools participating in the survey had videotaping facilities available in 1976 - a percentage that is undoubtedly much higher today. Sixty-six percent of the responding schools reported that "specialists on campus" to assist faculty in the use of television and audio/visual aids were an effective or very effective means

of faculty development. Perhaps, more important, the statistics indicated that the faculty thought so as well because they used the facilities and experts. Forty-four percent of the responding schools indicated that over 20% of the faculty used the media program when accompanied by expert advice. Twenty-one percent said that over 50% of the faculty used the program. However, when left to use videotape on their own, only 20% of the schools reported the use of the media facilities by over 5% of the faculty.[6]

Another effective faculty development program reported by Centra is the use of critiques of presentations by master teachers and individuals who are viewed as experts. However, while 57% of the schools viewed "specialists to help faculty develop teaching skills such as lecturing or leading discussion" as effective or very effective, only 5% of the schools showed use of the program by over 50% of the faculty. Only 24% of the schools showed use of between 5% and 50% by the faculty. Similarly, workshops in developing interpersonal skills and/or working effectively in groups were viewed as effective by 63% of the schools. Only 36% of the schools indicated that more than 5% of the faculty used the programs.[7]

Centra also mentioned a number of other areas that various programs offered that relate to speech communication, but that was not used often enough to be included in his study. They are:

1) developing better faculty-administration communication;
2) interdisciplinary discussions;
3) group dynamics; and
4) improving lecturing and discussion questioning techniques.[8]

O'Connell's et al report reveals that the speech communication related areas of faculty development were important factors in the eleven southern campus centers. Two of the general "new skills" learned in these faculty

development centers were media and interpersonal relationships.[9] The University of Florida's office of Instructional Resources is extremely active in designing and using media to aid instruction. Indeed, their "Instructional Laboratory" division is really a television production unit.[10] The same can be said for many of the other schools such as Virginia Tech, Memphis State or Kentucky. Kentucky actually took a broadcast television production unit, with "producer/directors who formerly worked exclusively as media designers in television and film" and converted them and the facility to the purpose of "instructional design."[11] Kentucky has also led in the use of media to help show how interpersonal communication situations can develop and might be better handled. Their "trigger films" have had national exposure and influence.[12] Texas, Arlington, and Virginia Commonwealth are other centers where interpersonal skills have been extensively used in faculty development.[13]

Other activities have included a program to aid in "lecturing/group discussion techniques, in individual consultation and in developing a classroom observation instrument" at the University of Alabama.[14] Florida has developed short courses in "small group discussion skills and lecturing skills."[15] Alabama, and Texas, Arlington have been active in the areas of simulation and gaming.[16]

Given all of the speech communication related activity in faculty development centers, one would assume that they are an important adjunct of the discipline and heavily peopled by speech communication professionals. Such, however, is not the case. The September, 1980 issue of Communication Education, devoted to "the Status of the Discipline," does not even mention the discipline's involvement with improving higher education or faculty

development. The S.R.E.B. study indicated that only one center director came from a speech communication field.[17]

I do not mean that speech communication professionals have not been involved with faculty development or instructional improvement centers. A professor of speech communication developed the lecture/group discussion aids at Alabama. Another was involved in the developments at Virginia Commonwealth. Kentucky, V.P.I. and Memphis State have made use of media/television/film professionals who have speech communication training and background. However, the profession and the departments within institutions where faculty development is taking place have been slow to recognize the importance of the movement and how important it can be to speech communication.

It seems to me to be very short sighted in a time of difficulties placing students and, indeed, keeping faculty, to ignore an obvious opportunity to not only provide for one's self and one's own, but to help your friends and colleagues as well. After the detailing of all of the speech communication activities in faculty development, it should be obvious that there is a need for people with skills in those areas to enter that occupation as full- or part-time contributors and employees.

The need has been recognized by those in the faculty development profession. Mary Crow, one of the authors of the S.R.E.B. study, went beyond her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology to get a background in educational television and "special training in the areas of speech and group dynamics."[18] Stanley Huffman, the director of V.P.I.'s Learning Resource Center, chose his employees based upon "specific backgrounds" related to this work. Besides his media degree and media teaching experience, his employees include

one with a "background in television," one in "general utilization of media," one with "a degree in media with an emphasis on instructional design and administrative experience in media at a smaller university," and several production staff members with backgrounds in television production, photography and television engineering.[19] Other programs such as Kentucky's, Memphis State's and Texas at Austin's have speech communication students, staff and/or faculty involved in the center in various ways.[20] However, these examples remain the exception to the rule.

What the profession and each of us needs to do is, first, become aware of the activities of the program or center for faculty development on our campuses. Second, develop contacts with center personnel so that their needs and your expertise can be made known. Third, encourage formal relationships with the center. These do not have to be full-time jobs. Indeed, most staff members of centers "hold joint appointments."[21] They might involve released time, a mini-grant, or graduate assistants or student workers. Fifth, encourage students to look to the center as an employment opportunity. Sixth, develop cooperative programs with the Education School or Psychology Department to better train your students to operate in the environment of the center.

I believe that if we as a profession can overcome our myopic behavior toward faculty development we will not only reap the rewards for ourselves and future members employed in the field of faculty development, but will also greatly benefit the faculty development movement by bringing to it expertise in many of the areas in which it is now not always successfully engaging. Perhaps when this change has taken place we will see a closer relationship between perceived effectiveness of programs and faculty

use as the faculty development centers will not only have media facilities but also the training and experience of the speech communication expert specifically involved in improving the quality of higher education.

FOOTNOTES

1. Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 1976, p.7.
2. Ibid., p.8.
3. Ibid., p.15.
4. Mary Lynn Crow, Ohmer Milton, W. Edmund Moomaw, William R. O'Connell, Jr., ed. Faculty Development Centers in Southern Universities. Atlanta, Georgia: Southern Regional Education Board, 1976, p.iii.
5. "Components Of An Effective Faculty Development Program," Journal of Higher Education, XLVI (1975), pp.177-211; Toward Faculty Renewal, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1973; "The Practice of Faculty Development," Journal of Higher Education, XLVII (1976), pp.289-308.
6. pp.14-21.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p.87.
9. p.11.
10. Ibid., pp.21-23.
11. Ibid., p.28.
12. Ibid., p.26.
13. Ibid., pp.40,49.
14. Ibid., p.15.
15. Ibid., p.23.
16. Ibid., p.15,41.
17. Ibid., p.57.
18. Ibid., p.40.
19. Ibid., p.51.
20. Ibid., pp.28,32.41.
21. Ibid., p.11.